

PORTLAND, OR--Today, Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) held a press conference to highlight his federal pet protection legislation. The conference, which also celebrated the enactment of a similar new Oregon state law, was held at the Oregon Humane Society in Portland.

Blumenauer's legislation allows pet owners to set up a charitable trust for the care of their pet upon the owner's death or disability. The legislation, titled the "Charitable Pet Trusts Act", would add a new section to the Internal Revenue Code to allow for the creation of charitable trusts for pets when the remainder interest passes to a qualified charity. The new section would mirror the current language for existing charitable trusts and includes provisions design to prevent fraud. The bill was introduced in May 2001 and has been referred to the House Ways and Means Committee.

According to Blumenauer, "Whether it's a dog, cat, or rabbit, companion animals bring great joy and contentment to their owners throughout their lives. Pet owners from coast-to-coast are anxious to ensure the safety, well-being, and health of these important friends. This legislation allows them to do so and offers an important measure of comfort to those seeking to ensure the proper care of their long time friend."

Unfortunately, because current laws relating to estate planning do not specifically mention animals, many pet bequests do not stand up to legal scrutiny, particularly in regard to charitable trusts. While a few states, California, Alaska, New York, Missouri, Tennessee and now Oregon, recognize such trusts through state tax laws, there are currently no such provisions at the federal level. This legislation would give federal taxpayers the ability to establish and accrue the tax benefits of such trusts.

For more information on Congressman Blumenauer's work on animal rights, visit his web site at <http://www.house.gov/blumenauer/>.